



# INTEGRATING FAMILY SERVICES

## IFS Regional Governance Guidance

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## **I. EXPLANATORY NOTES FROM THE IFS MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Part of translating the leadership and governance element of the Integrating Family Services (IFS) model into practice includes the adoption by all IFS teams of a governance agreement.

**Like with all other elements of the IFS model, we are striving to strike a balance between ensuring statewide consistency and regional flexibility.** This aim, coupled with research concerning human services integration efforts in other states, input from community partners and the experience of Children's Integrated Services (CIS), informed the contents of this document.

While it is up to each team to establish its own governance agreement, this document is intended to provide guidance to IFS regional governance teams in that process, particularly as it relates to step #6 in the *IFS Regional Governance Guidance* document.

- “Essential elements” reflect our expectations regarding what must be included in every team’s governance agreement.
- We have provided sample language for your consideration, which may be altered as each team deems appropriate.
- In some cases, we have suggested resources (available in the IFS Manual) which teams may find helpful. In instances where the Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) Manual is referenced, please take into consideration that some aspects of CIS governance will vary from IFS governance, thereby language in the CIS Manual will need to be adapted to fit IFS. [Note: All references to the Manual will include live links.] For the purposes of this document, “team” refers to your nascent, evolving or established IFS regional governance team.

This document was prepared based on the assumption that we will continue with IFS grants during FY16, thus the reference to “grantees” and “grants.” The 2015-2018 IFS Strategic Work Plan calls for the IFS Finance and Payment Reform Work Group to consider the pros and cons of moving from grantees to fiscal agents and make a recommendation to the IFS Management Team for FY17 and beyond.

As indicated by the IFS Strategic Work Plan, there are still discussions to be had and decisions to be made. Consequently, some aspects of this document will be clarified further over the next year.

We encourage you to consult the IFS team member who is providing your team with technical assistance as you develop your IFS regional team governance agreement. If you are unclear as to who that person is, please contact IFS Director Cheryle Bilodeau at [cheryle.bilodeau@state.vt.us](mailto:cheryle.bilodeau@state.vt.us) or 802-760-9171.

## **II. DEFINITION OF GOVERNANCE**

While there are many definitions of “governance,” this is the working definition the IFS Management Team is using:

“Governance refers to how (often multiple) [services] and entities are managed to promote efficiency, excellence, and equity. It comprises the traditions, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised, how constituents are given voice, and how decisions are made on issues of mutual concern” (BUILD Initiative, *Early Childhood Governance*).

## **III. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE TEAM’S VALUES STATEMENT**

- ❖ **Essential element**—A statement that describes the key value, philosophy or tenet that binds your team.
- ❖ **Sample language**—As members of the [region] IFS Regional Governance Team, we share a responsibility to be stewards of our region’s resources for children, youth and families.

## **IV. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE TEAM’S PURPOSE**

- ❖ **Essential Element**—A brief statement that explains your team’s primary purpose.
- ❖ **Sample language**—To provide leadership at the community level on implementation of all elements of the IFS model.

## **V. REGIONAL IFS GRANTEE’S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- ❖ **Essential Element**—Primary responsibilities of your region’s IFS grantee.
- ❖ **Sample Language**—[Insert name of organization] will serve as the grantee for this region’s IFS grant. As such, its responsibilities, as distinct from the Regional Governance Team, include:
  1. Oversight of the IFS regional contract with the Agency of Human Services;
  2. Oversight of the subcontracts for services provided through the IFS regional grant;
  3. Define and implement evaluation and corrective action for programs and contracted services according to the processes outlined in this governance agreement;
  4. Participate in the hiring and evaluation of key IFS staff (but not responsible for supervision).
- ❖ **Suggested Resource**—See the related section in the Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) Manual.

## **VI. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE TEAM’S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- ❖ **Essential Elements**
  - Currently, the Agency of Human Services awards and oversees IFS grants. In this context, the regional governance teams collectively review performance

measures and make recommendations to the IFS grantee regarding prioritization of resources. If the Agency makes a shift from grantees to fiscal agent, the role of the regional governance teams would change.

- Regardless of grantee or fiscal agent status, regional governance agreements must address:
  - Your team's roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the IFS Management Team and the IFS Senior Leadership Team;
  - Your commitment to implementing the eight elements of the IFS model with fidelity based on technical assistance from the IFS Management Team, the IFS Manual, and other guidance documents (see below).
- While the Regional governance teams are not the appropriate place to make case decisions, your governance agreement should specify where those decisions are made (e.g. Local Interagency Team).
- The regional governance team is responsible for ensuring that its work aligns with existing plans (e.g. System of care/Act 264, BBF Regional Plan) and local/regional work groups.

❖ **Sample Language**—The Regional Governance Team has decision-making authority on policy issues that pertain to IFS' implementation in [region]. However, all decisions made by the Regional Governance Team must align with IFS guiding documents, including:

- The eight elements of the IFS model and their related components;
- IFS Building Blocks for Change (IFS' Theory of Change);
- IFS guiding principles;
- The region's IFS grant/contract;
- The IFS Manual; and
- The IFS Performance Framework (including the IFS outcomes, population indicators and performance measures).

Specific roles and responsibilities include:

1. Oversight of funds in the IFS portfolio for the [region's name] region;
2. Plan strategically and set goals for the team that are in concert with the outcomes of the IFS grant and reflect community needs and resources;
3. Ensure the outcomes of the grant are being met satisfactorily;
4. Ensure community involvement in the team;
5. Ensure adherence to the IFS guiding principles in all implementation decisions;
6. Serve in an advisory role to the IFS Management Team and IFS Senior Leadership Team on issues related to IFS management and statewide operations.

❖ **Suggested Resource**—See the related section in the Children's Integrated Services (CIS) Manual.

## **VII. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

### **❖ Essential Elements**

- IFS team membership (you may choose whether you list populations, types of services providers, etc. (e.g. child welfare, early intervention, family support) or list specific organizations/agencies as provided below).
- Whether team members may identify a designee to participate on the team in their stead. In that case, the designee's decision-making authority must be specified.
- How your team will address inconsistent participation of a team member, should that situation arise.
- How to ensure that team decisions reflect input from youth and families who access IFS resources of any kind.
- Whether you will establish ad-hoc and/or standing subcommittees, work groups, etc. to facilitate efficient and effective group work, thereby possibly accommodating a larger governance team.
- Other avenues for community input and subcommittee membership for partners who do not sit on the IFS Regional Governance Team.

### **❖ Sample language** (this list corresponds to step #3 in the *Regional Readiness Guidance* document)

- Potential regional partners include:
  - 1) Parent Child Center Executive Director
  - 2) Regional Children's Integrated Services Coordinator
  - 3) Designated mental health services agency serving children and adults (CEO and/or a manager of children's services)
  - 4) Designated developmental services agency serving children and adults (CEO and/or a manager of children's services)
  - 5) Specialized services agency Executive Director
  - 6) Executive Director of the regional Children's Integrated Services grantee
  - 7) AHS Field Services Director
  - 8) Local Family Services Division District Director (DCF)
  - 9) Economic Services Division Regional Director (DCF)
  - 10) Department of Corrections representative (e.g. local Case Work Supervisor or Probation Officer)
  - 11) Department of Health District Director
  - 12) Executive Director of Vermont Coalition of Homeless and Runaway Youth (VCHRYP) provider (if not represented elsewhere on this list)
  - 13) Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (ADAP) regional prevention consultant
  - 14) Preferred Provider for substance abuse treatment
  - 15) Housing continuum representative (if not represented elsewhere on this list)
  - 16) Voc Rehab Regional Manager or delegate
  - 17) Building Bright Futures Council Regional Director
  - 18) Blueprint Community Health Project Manager

- 19) Parent and one staff member from an organization(s) in which families play a key decision-making role
- 20) Representation from a Supervisory Union
- 21) Local Interagency Team Coordinator
- The Regional Governance Team will review its membership periodically to ensure it is inclusive of all appropriate partners.
- Regional Governance Team members may send an authorized [needs to be defined] and informed designee in their stead. S(h)e will have the same decision-making authority as all other team members.
- It is assumed that each member will attend Regional Governance Team meetings on a regular basis.

❖ **Suggested Resource**—See the *IFS Regional Governance Guidance* document (steps #3) regarding partners to include.

## **VIII. TEAM OPERATIONS (HOW THE TEAM FUNCTIONS)**

### ❖ **Essential Elements**

- a) The team's approach to leadership
- b) How the team will handle discussion during meetings
- c) The team's core values
- d) The team's group norms
- e) How the team will make decisions (e.g., consensus, majority vote)
- f) How the team will resolve conflict
- g) How the team will ensure inclusion of the youth and family voice in decision-making
- h) Meeting facilitation
- i) Development of meeting agendas
- j) Meeting minutes
- k) Meeting frequency
- l) Confidentiality (policy regarding handling of confidential information shared among Regional Governance Team members)
- m) Relationship to other local/regional governing bodies

### ❖ **Sample Language and Suggested Resources (underlined)**

- a) **Discussion:** The Regional Governance Team uses the Appreciative Inquiry framework to guide group discussions and create an environment conducive to creative problem-solving and thinking.
- b) **Shared leadership:** All Regional Governance Team members carry equal weight in all matters and responsibilities related to the Regional Governance Team, including but not limited to decision-making. The Regional Governance Team uses the Appreciative Leadership framework to define its leadership style and make the most use of the Team's creative potential and individual strengths
- c) **Team Core Values:**
  - a. Sense of shared responsibility for IFS
  - b. Focus on family-centered services

- c. Responsiveness to community needs, including examining gaps in services (amongst IFS programs, IFS partners, and beyond)
  - d. Support of collaboration
  - e. Respect for all people and partners involved
  - f. Transparent communication
  - g. Clarity enough to survive personal and organizational succession
  - h. Openness to change and to the process of change
  - i. Attention to data, including family feedback
  - j. Support of continuous process improvement to achieve better outcomes
- d) **Group Norms:** These define and clarify what Regional Governance Team members expect of themselves and each other. Examples include sharing “air time” at meetings, expressing feelings as well as ideas, handling disagreement, preparation for and attendance at meetings, and completion of tasks in a timely way.
- e) **Decision-Making:** The Regional Governance team will seek to make all decisions by consensus and may use the Gradients of Agreement (see IFS Manual Section 6, Chapter 5) as a guide to arriving at consensus. In instances when consensus cannot be reached and a time-sensitive issue is before the group, the will of the majority of those present may move the decision forward. If agreement cannot be reached by consensus and the matter at hand is not particularly time-sensitive, the issue will be tabled until the next meeting for discussion. Absent members will be informed of that issue prior to the next meeting via notes/minutes. If consensus is not reached at the second meeting, a vote will be taken. The vote will not be taken at the meeting; rather, it will be taken via email and will include all regular members of the team. Votes will be tallied, and the majority will prevail once all members have voted. The state grievance process and arbitration process can be accessed in extreme situations.
- f) **Meeting Facilitation:** Regional Governance Team meetings will be facilitated by a Regional Governance Team member, as determined by the Regional Governance Team, with secondary accountability and responsibility for adhering to group norms shared by the entire team. See the Manual for tips to effective meeting facilitation.
- g) **Meeting Agendas:** Meeting agendas will generally be determined by the Regional Governance Team based on pressing items that need attention, items generated from previous Regional Governance Team meeting discussions, and items requested by Regional Governance Team members for discussion. Standing agenda items include updates from Regional Governance Team members and review of tasks and decisions by the facilitator at the end of each meeting.
- h) **Meeting Minutes:** Minutes will be taken at every meeting and posted by the designated individual (to be determined by the Regional Governance Team) within one week on an agreed-upon location that is accessible to the entire Regional Governance Team. See the Manual for a meeting minute template used by the Senior Leadership and Implementation Teams.
- i) **Meeting Frequency:** The Regional Governance Team will meet at least monthly. Team subcommittees will meet as needed, to be determined by each subcommittee.

- j) **Conflict resolution protocol:** The Regional Governance Team follows the individual and team conflict resolution protocol developed by Regional Governance Team. In instances where the Regional Governance Team bumps up against systemic barriers, the IFS Management Team will work with the Regional Governance Team to identify solutions.
- k) **Confidentiality:** See the CIS Manual.
- l) **Other governing bodies:** The Regional Governance Team will coordinate and communicate regularly with other regional/local governing bodies and teams that also focus on coordinating and integrating services for children, youth and families in the region, including but not limited to the Local Interagency Team (LIT), Children's Integrated Services (CIS) Administrative Team, and the Building Bright Futures Regional Council.

## **IX. FY16 ACTIVITIES**

### **TEAM PERFORMANCE GOALS AND RELATED MILESTONES**

- ❖ **Essential Element**—This section specifies your team's goals for the team and how you will know you are making progress toward those goals (as distinct from the goals for IFS as a whole).
- ❖ **Sample language and Suggested Resources**—To help measure its growth and performance as a team, the regional governance team will:
  - 1. Complete and discuss an annual team self-assessment;
  - 2. Review its governance agreement annually to identify opportunities for enhanced functioning and/or effectiveness

## **X. TRAINING**

IFS will provide professional development opportunities, which will include regional governance teams as appropriate. The IFS Management Team will keep regional governance teams abreast of those opportunities as they arise.